

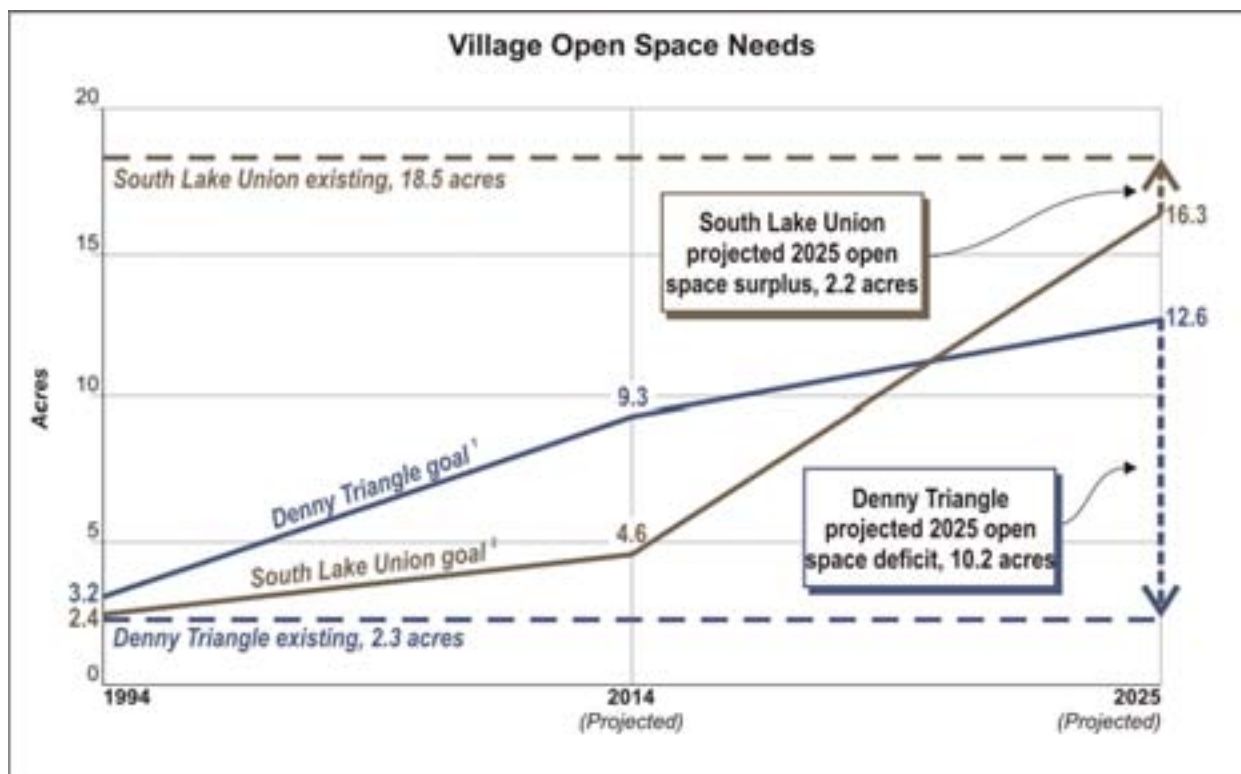
III. Park and Recreational Facility Needs

Needs Relative to Parks and Recreation Plan 2000 Goals

The Park and Recreation Plan 2000 (hereafter referred to as the Park Plan 2000) provides open space goals for Urban Villages based on household and employment population: one acre of Village Open Space per 1,000 households plus one acre per 10,000 jobs. Such Village Open Space must be at least 10,000 square feet in size, accessible to the public, and usable for recreation and social activities.

The combined North Downtown area will need 8 acres of open space by 2025 to meet Parks Plan 2000 goals given population and employment estimates. According to Table 2, South Lake Union would maintain a small surplus of open space by 2025, but Denny Triangle would have a deficit of more than 10 acres of open space if no new open spaces are added by 2025.

Table 2. Village Open Space Acreage Needed for Residential & Employment Populations



Notes:

1. Denny Triangle 2025 estimates based on continuing the same growth rate as projected by the Seattle Comprehensive Plan for the period between 1994 and 2014, which was 184 new units per year.
2. South Lake Union 2025 estimates based on Heartland's projections in the South Lake Union Capacity Model memo dated October, 2003.

Table 3. Village Open Space Acreage Required for Residential and Employment Populations

	Denny Triangle	South Lake Union	North Downtown Total
Existing Village Open Space²	2.3 acres	18.5 acres	20.8 acres
1994 Open Space Goal for Households and Jobs ¹	3.2 acres	2.4 acres	5.6 acres
Open Space Needed by 2005 to Meet Goal	0.9 acre	0 acres	0 acres
2014 Open Space Goal per Projected Jobs and Households ³	9.3 acres	4.7 acres	14 acres
Open Space Needed by 2014 to Meet Goal	7 acres	0 acres	0 acres
2025 Open Space Goal per Projected Jobs and Households ^{4 and 5}	12.5 acres ⁴	16.3 acres ⁵	28.8 acres^{4 and 5}
Open Space Needed by 2025 to Meet Goal	10.2 acres	0 acres	8 acres

Notes:

1. Goal as stated in the Park Plan 2000 is 1 acre per 1,000 residents plus 1 acre per 10,000 employees.
2. Village Open Space is defined in the Parks Plan 2000 as a dedicated open space of at least 10,000 square feet in size, publicly accessible, and usable for recreation and social activities
3. Projections are from the Seattle Comprehensive Plan, 1994.
4. Denny Triangle estimates based on continuing the same growth rate as projected by the Seattle Comprehensive Plan for the period between 1994 and 2014, which was approximately 184 new residential units per year plus 1,000 new jobs per year.
5. South Lake Union estimates based on Heartland's projections in the South Lake Union Capacity Model memo dated October, 2003.

Conclusions and Considerations (Park Needs)

While these quantitative figures do not take into account the quality and performance of existing open spaces, they do show a significant shortage of open space, specifically in Denny Triangle.

Assessing future park needs is complicated by several factors. For one thing, the North Downtown area's open space and recreational needs are different from other Urban Villages in the city. The growth projections and City Vision call for an increasingly diverse mix of user groups, including office workers, bio-tech employees, residents, and tourists. This emerging population will require a variety of park and recreation facilities. There are also a number of important regional resources, such as Seattle Center, Elliott Bay, and Lake Union, which serve local populations but are either outside downtown boundaries or are difficult to quantify. Nevertheless, a substantial increase in both the amount and variety of open space resources will be needed to serve the North Downtown area's projected 2025 employment and residential population.

There are numerous physical barriers throughout the North Downtown area that make it difficult to access existing open spaces. Pedestrian and bicycle connections need to be improved to South Lake Union Park and all City parks to optimize our resources.

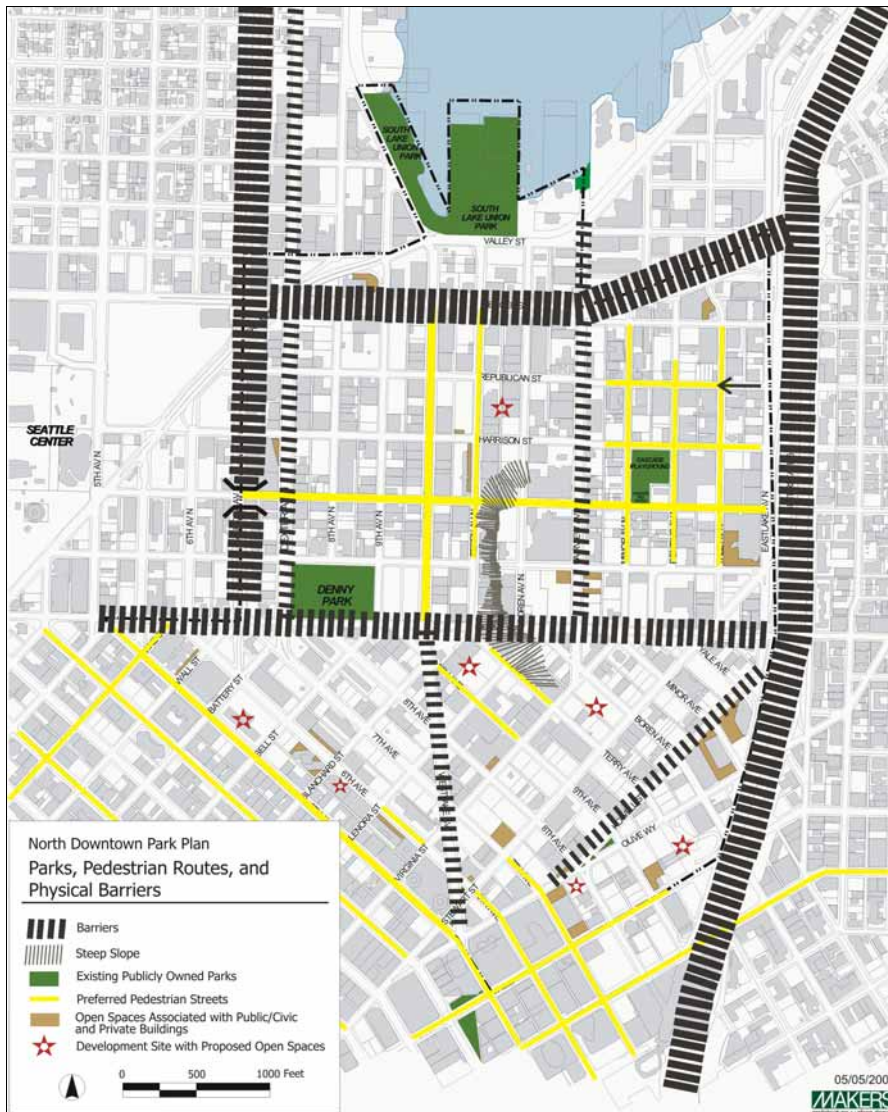


Figure 13. Illustrating How Existing Roadways and Other Physical Barriers Impact Pedestrian Connectivity in the North Downtown Area.

To assess more specific needs, the planning team conducted two working sessions with key developers, stakeholders, and City staff to gather input, reviewed current resources, consulted neighborhood plans, reviewed park and recreation planning research, and interviewed property owners. Work was reviewed by an oversight committee, for evaluation of relative priorities for new facilities. Based on this evaluation, the following park and recreational needs are recommended:

- Large active open space
- Neighborhood parks (Denny Triangle)
- Community center facilities (including a gymnasium)
- Sports courts
- Children's play areas
- Off-leash dog areas
- Urban plazas
- Community gardens
- Trails and other bicycle/pedestrian connections

The following pages describe the definition, current conditions, need, and goals for these desired park and recreational facilities for the North Downtown area.

Large Active Open Space

Description: Large, flat open spaces (at least one acre in size) that provide opportunities for active recreational uses:

- Field sports such as soccer, baseball, or softball
- Open turf areas available for informal recreational.

Existing and Planned Sites:

- Privately owned Denny Playfield contains a programmed soccer field. However, plans have been submitted to convert the property to commercial development.
- Planned improvements for both South Lake Union Park and Cascade Playground include non-programmed turf areas that are at least one acre in size.
- Denny Park includes extensive turf areas, but topography and trees prevent the park's use as an informal sports field.

Need per Parks Plan 2000: Sports fields within 1-2 miles of every household. Compliance status:

- Sites on Capitol and Queen Anne Hills are within 1-2 miles of the planning area. However, these fields are booked on an ongoing basis and difficult to get to.
- Large informal areas not specifically defined in the Parks Plan 2000, but recognized as one of many types of Urban Village Open Space.

Discussion of Need and Obstacles:

- Sports fields are recognized as a regional facility.
- Sites are very expensive due to the high cost of land in the planning area.
- There is a strong desire for such a site. The popularity of Denny Playfield has proved this.
- There is a perceived need for a site to attract families to the area. Also, the use would complement Cornish College and Biotech uses.
- Active recreational needs have and will evolve. Informal spaces may be most useful at this point.

Goal:

- Replace acreage and uses lost by the displaced Denny Playfield (approximately 2 acres). The site could be anywhere within the planning area, or a site outside of the planning area, but within easy bicycle or pedestrian access from the planning area.



Figure 14. Sports Fields.



Figure 15. Open Space for Informal Recreational Activities.

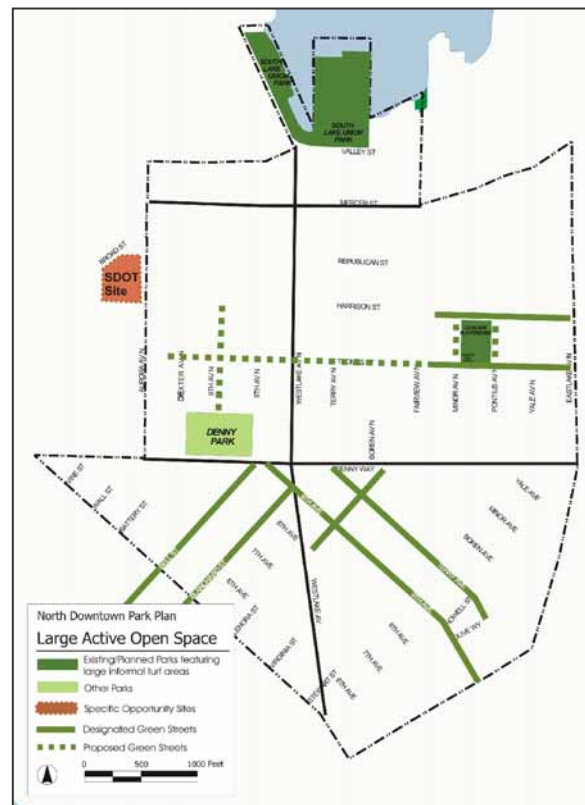


Figure 16. Large Open Space Opportunities.

Neighborhood Park (Village Commons)

Description: A usable open space at least one-acre in size that functions as a neighborhood park and containing a variety of uses and activities. The site should be flat or terraced and sited in a location accessible to neighborhood residents.

Existing and Planned Sites:

- Due to their size, South Lake Union Park, Denny Park, and Cascade Playground all qualify as neighborhood parks per Parks Plan 2000 definition, but only Cascade Playground functions as a neighborhood park.
- There are no sites in Denny Triangle.

Need per Parks Plan 2000: All Urban Villages should contain at least one neighborhood park.

Compliance status:

- South Lake Union meets this need; Denny Triangle does not.

Discussion of Need:

- There is a strong need for sites in Denny Triangle
- Denny Park is a significant resource and has the opportunity to become a productive neighborhood park.
- Despite improvements, South Lake Union Park will function more as a regional park rather than a neighborhood park.

Goal:

- Two new neighborhood parks in Denny Triangle; one on each side of Westlake Avenue.
- Upgrade Denny Park (see Action B-1 in Section IV) to better function as a “neighborhood park” for the western portion of South Lake Union and other nearby properties.



Figure 17. Cascade Playground Functions Well as a Neighborhood Park.

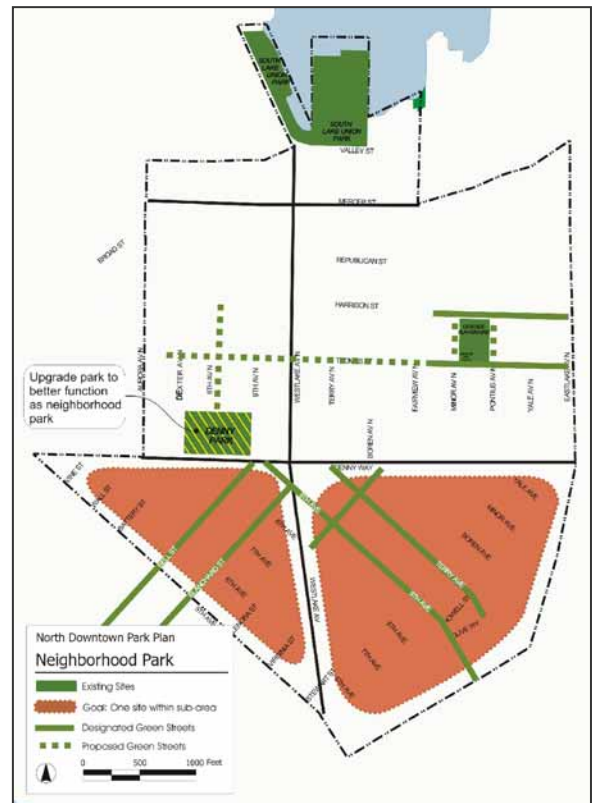


Figure 18. Neighborhood Park Goals.

Description: A desirable configuration includes approximately 20,000 SF of indoor space with a balanced combination of multi-purpose activity and gymnasium space. Ideally, outdoor space should be nearby.

Existing and Planned Sites:

- There is a proposed Belltown neighborhood center, nearby, which includes meeting rooms and some other components of a community center, but not a gymnasium.
- The Armory building is being renovated as part of the ProParks South Lake Union Park redevelopment and will include community center-like facilities.

Need per Parks Plan 2000: One community center per urban center is desirable, while one such space within 1-1/2 miles of every household is acceptable. Compliance status:

- No sites within the planning area.
- 3 sites are within 1-1/2 miles of all or parts of the planning area, but all are difficult to get to.

Discussion of Need and Site Development:

- Strong desire for at least one site.
- There is a deficit of sites not just in the planning area, but in all of downtown.
- Since these facilities can be sited indoors, there are opportunities to integrate such facilities with new development. New community center in the International District will be a good case study.
- Private indoor facilities can alleviate some of the need.

Goal:

- One full-service community center (including a gymnasium; or
- A combination of facilities that include at least one gymnasium space and a facility for multipurpose activities within the planning area.
- A site within Denny Triangle or other site within close proximity to Belltown would be the first preference for a facility with a gymnasium.

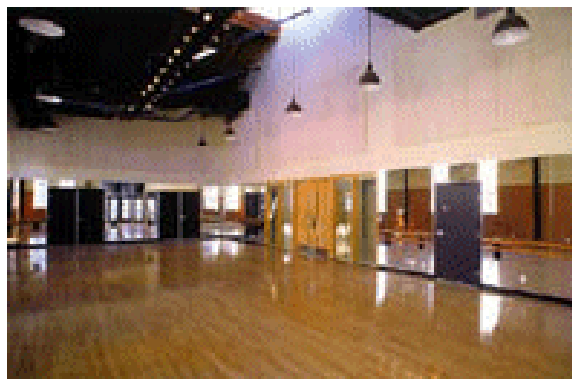


Figure 19. Gymnasium Space.

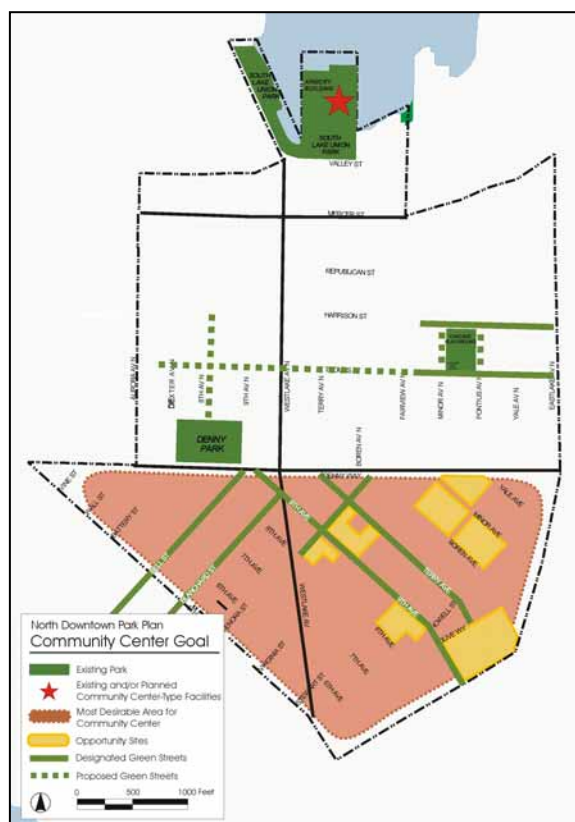


Figure 20. Community Center Siting Goals and Opportunity Sites.

Sports Courts

Description: Sports courts include basketball, volleyball, and tennis courts, skateboard parks, and other similar active recreational uses that require a similar amount of space. The minimum size for a site would be 2,500 square feet (accommodates a mini half-basketball court).

Existing and Planned Sites:

- Privately owned Denny Playfield contains one basketball court. However, plans have been submitted to convert the property to commercial development.
- There is an existing skateboard park at Seattle Center.



Figure 21. Sports Courts.

Need per Parks Plan 2000: Basketball courts are desirable within 1 mile of residential areas. Volleyball courts are desirable in each sector of the city. A 4-court outdoor tennis complex is desirable at or near each community center or when sited in response to strong community support. Compliance status:

- Outside of temporary Denny Playfield, there are no basketball courts in the planning area. However, there are courts within 1-mile of the planning area.
- Although there are no volleyball courts in the planning area, there are courts in the west sector of the City.
- There are tennis courts within 1-2 miles of the planning area.

Discussion of Need and Site Development:

- Such facilities are important in the development of healthy urban residential neighborhoods within the planning area – particularly basketball courts.
- Whereas tennis and volleyball courts are often more effective when grouped, basketball courts can be split up effectively as individual courts, or even half or mini courts and serve community needs.
- Sports courts, including skateboard parks, could be effectively combined with other types of open space and recreational facilities to create to generate a diversity of ongoing activity as desired.
- Since they occupy a smaller piece of land than sports fields, there are more opportunities for sports courts in the planning area.

Goal:

- One site in each sector of the planning area. A half-court basketball court would qualify as a full site.

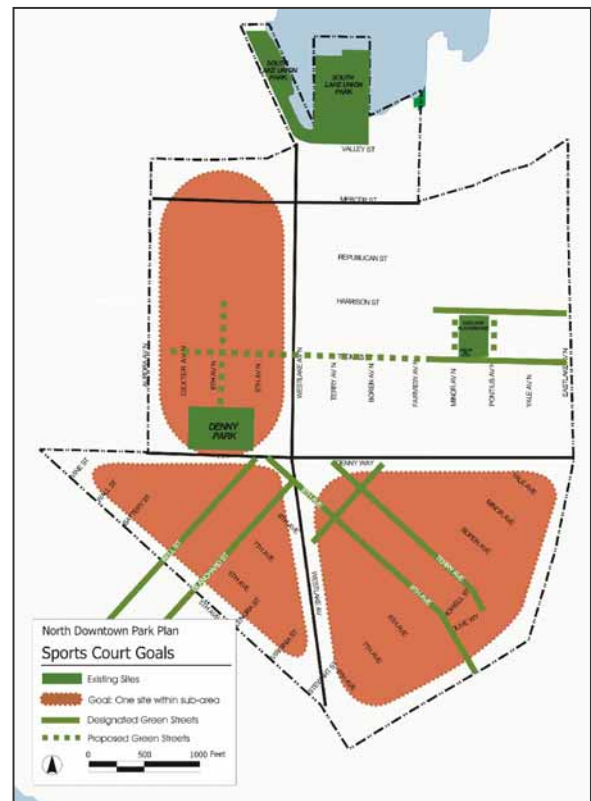


Figure 22. Sports Court Goals.

Children's Play Area

Description: This can be a neighborhood play area or a destination play area with playground facilities for children generally between the ages 2-11. Sites should include play equipment and sitting areas. Water play features could be integrated into the site, where desirable.

Existing and Planned Sites:

- Cascade Playground currently includes a children's play area.
- A water play feature is planned as part of the South Lake Union Park improvements.
- Nearby Seattle Center includes recreational amenities for children.



Figure 23. Children's Play Area.

Need per Parks Plan 2000: Sites desirable within ½ mile of residential areas with at least 100-200 resident children ages 2 to 11 and/or in areas with several day cares or pre-schools.

Compliance status:

- Most of the planning area is within ½ mile of Cascade Playground.

Discussion of Need:

- There will be a growing need for sites in order to attract more families to the planning area.
- Since sites don't need to be very large, they can easily be combined with other facilities.

Goal:

- One play area each in the west sector of South Lake Union and the east sector of Denny Triangle and two play areas in the west sector of Denny Triangle. This equates to one children's play area within ¼ mile of all sites within the planning area.



Figure 24. Children's Play Area Goals.

Urban Plazas

Description: Open spaces that combine hard surfaced areas with landscaping components. Sites should be visible, welcoming, and integrated with the adjacent building(s).

Existing and Planned Sites:

- Several existing sites in Denny Triangle associated with office towers.
- Multiple sites are planned as part of office development in South Lake Union and Denny Triangle.

Need per Parks Plan 2000: Urban plazas are one of many different types of Urban Village Open Spaces that will be needed to make up the projected North Downtown deficit of 8 acres by 2025.

Discussion of Need:

- Sites are particularly important in commercial areas for socializing, relaxing, and urban relief.
- Under development regulations over the past twenty years, the majority of privately created open spaces in the greater downtown area have been urban plazas. While there will be a continued need for sites, there is a desire to create a greater variety of open spaces – not just in the planning area, but in all of downtown.
- Design of sites is extremely important.

Goal:

- Highest priorities for urban plazas are along the streetcar route (Westlake Avenue and Terry Avenue N), in Denny Triangle with office tower development, and to a lesser extent, with biotech and other office development in South Lake Union.
- Where possible and desirable, combine sites with other types of open spaces and uses.



Figure 25. Urban Plaza Spaces.

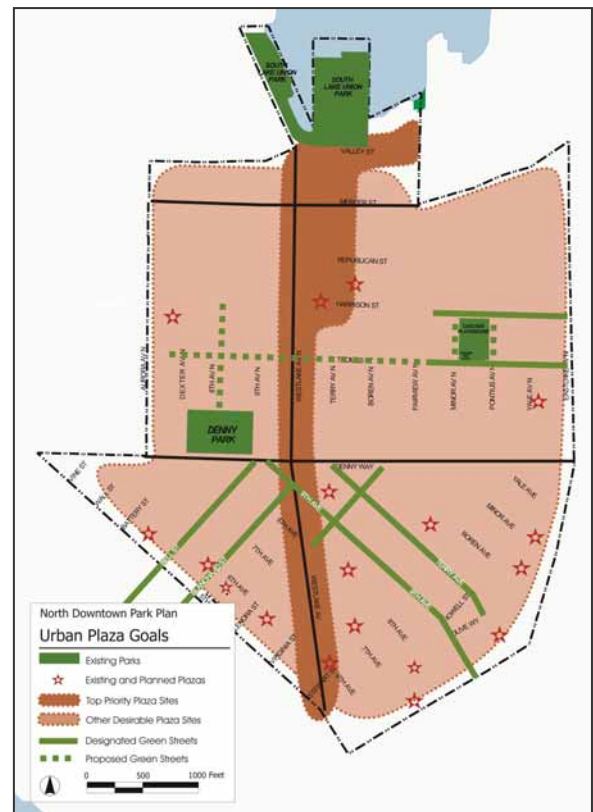


Figure 26. Urban Plaza Goals.

Definition: Off-leash dog areas contained with fencing that may also including pathways, benches, kiosks, drinking fountains, or other park furniture appropriate to the site.

Existing and Planned Sites:

- No sites currently in the planning area
- Nearby Regrade Park in Belltown was recently reconstructed as an off-leash dog park; it is within a half-mile walk of most of Denny Triangle and parts of South Lake Union.



Figure 27. Off-Leash Dog Area.

Need per Parks Plan 2000: Sites are desirable in all sectors of the city. Compliance status:

- Nearby Regrade Park is in the west sector of the city.

Discussion of Need:

- There will be a growing need for sites in the planning area to attract residents.
- There is a desire for small sites oriented towards neighborhood use.
- The use could be on its own or combined with other facilities.

Goal:

- One site in each sector of the planning area (except for the western sector of Denny Triangle, which is in close proximity to Belltown's Regrade Park). This equates to one off-leash dog area within ¼ mile of all sites within the planning area.

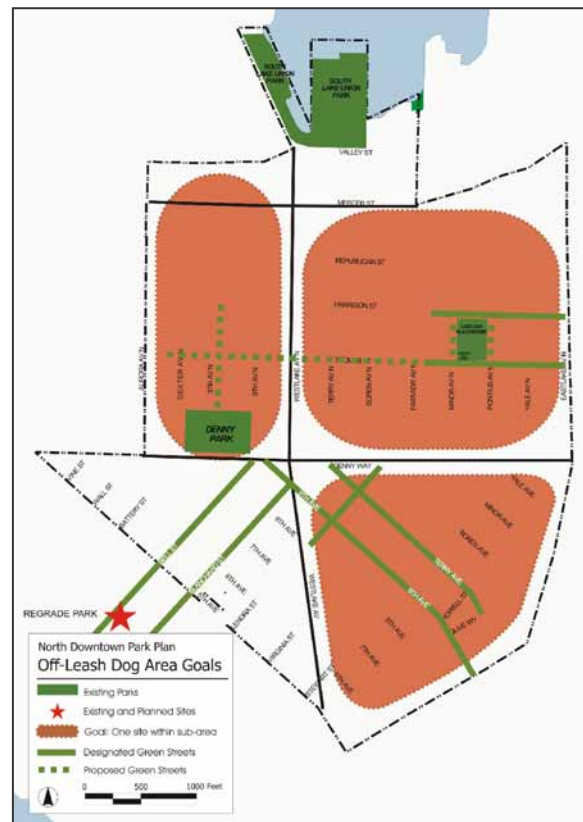


Figure 28. Off-Leash Dog Area Goals.

Community Gardens

Description: This includes garden areas maintained by community members. Sites are typically enclosed with fencing.

Existing and Planned Sites:

- One site at Cascade Playground.

Need per Parks Plan 2000: One site for each 2,500 households in urban villages. Compliance Status:

- Planning area meets current goal since there is one site in South Lake Union and less than 2,500 households in Denny Triangle.
- Four more sites will be needed by 2025 in the planning area (2 in SLU and 2 in Denny Triangle).

Discussion of Need:

- Sites are desirable – particularly where close to residential areas.
- While community gardens are seen as a positive thing, they can be seen as a restricted use of space – particularly given the high cost of land.
- While participants did not demonstrate a great need for additional community gardens, demand should be monitored over time.

Goal:

- One site in each sector of the planning area. This equates to one community garden within ¼ mile of all sites within the planning area.



Figure 29. Community Gardens.

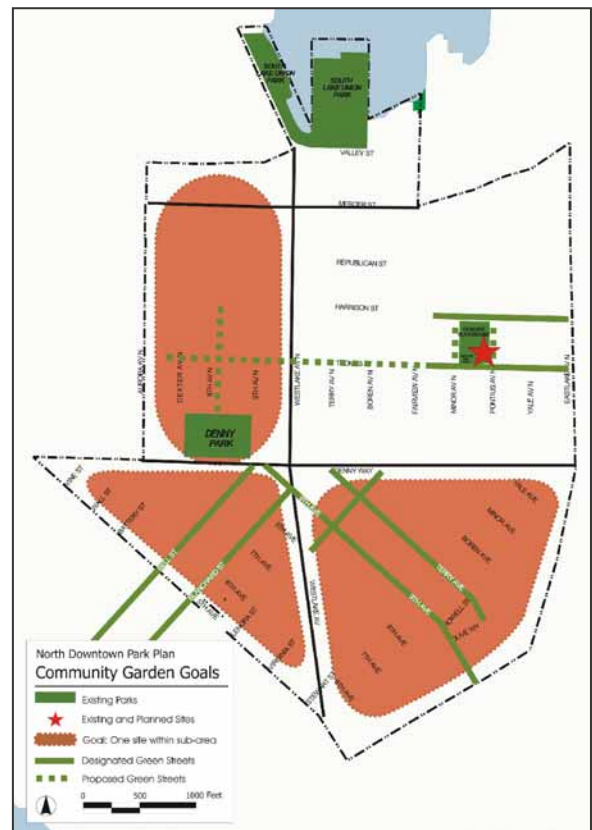


Figure 30. Community Garden Goals.

Description: Multi-purpose pathways for pedestrians and cyclists, improved Green Streets, designated bicycle routes, and other pedestrian-friendly routes.

Existing and Planned Connections:

- The new Lake Union Trail parallels the western shoreline of Lake Union to South Lake Union Park. There are plans to extend this pathway through the park towards Fairview Avenue N.
- There is a network of designated Green Streets within the planning area (see Figure 31), but only a small fraction of the streets feature Green Street improvements. These streets are intended as linear open spaces to encourage neighborhood activity and a sense of identity. Besides providing excellent pedestrian routes, Green Streets will be priority locations for neighborhood-oriented open spaces. Section IV includes guidelines for parks and open spaces located on Green Streets, and recommendations for implementing the City's Green Street program.
- Dexter Avenue N and Eastlake Avenue N are the primary bicycle routes through the planning area. Both routes link points north with the downtown area. Bicycle lanes are proposed for Fairview Avenue N north of Valley Street (not yet funded).
- A grade-separated crossing at Aurora Avenue N is proposed for either Harrison or Thomas Street to facilitate improved bicycle and pedestrian movement between South Lake Union and Seattle Center (not yet funded).
- The planned Bay to Lake Trail will include bicycle and pedestrian facilities and link South Lake Union Park with Elliott Bay via Valley Street, Roy Street, Dexter Avenue N, and Thomas or Harrison Street (not yet funded).

Need per Parks Plan 2000: Create an interconnected system of primary and secondary trails throughout the city.

Discussion of Need:

- Critical need for stronger pedestrian connections to existing park and recreational facilities. Safer street crossings are needed at numerous sites throughout the planning area.
- Strong interest in off-street trails for the planning area – particularly for South Lake Union. Participants acknowledged that the street grid minimizes opportunities for a continuous multi-purpose pathway and thus stressed the importance of implementing the Bay-to-Lake Trail.
- Desire for continuous, safe, and attractive walking routes. Streets such as Denny Way now represent breaks in continuity.
- Green Streets should be implemented as a connective network for neighborhood activity.
- Desire for a “loop” walking route(s) within the planning area. Designated Green Streets, key commercial streets such as Westlake Avenue, and the Bay-to-Lake and Lake Union Trails provide great opportunities to build upon in establishing loop walking routes within the planning area. Routes that provide connections to attractions in neighboring areas are also desirable.
- The proposed Aurora Avenue N crossing at Harrison or Thomas Street is critical to enhance east-west bicycle and pedestrian access through the planning area and to Seattle Center and points west.
- North-south bicycle links are important. Dexter Avenue N is a critical link into downtown and should be connected with a safe route to South Lake Union Park. Eastlake Avenue N is another key route and should be maintained and enhanced to the extent possible. Future street improvements should enhance bicycle access within and through the area to the extent possible (while balancing goals for pedestrian access and on-street parking).

Goals:

- Implement the Bay to Lake Trail and Lake Union Trail as planned.
- Develop and implement Green Street improvement plans on existing and proposed Green Streets.
- Identify and enhance loop walking routes within and/or through the planning area.
- Implement the proposed grade separated crossing of Aurora Avenue N at Thomas or Harrison Street.
- Enhance pedestrian crossings on major arterials, notably Mercer Way near South Lake Union Park and Denny Way adjacent to Denny Park and at Westlake Avenue and Fairview Avenue N.
- Upgrade pedestrian access along the Denny Way corridor.
- Upgrade pedestrian access along Westlake Avenue and Terry Avenue N in conjunction with streetcar and private development.

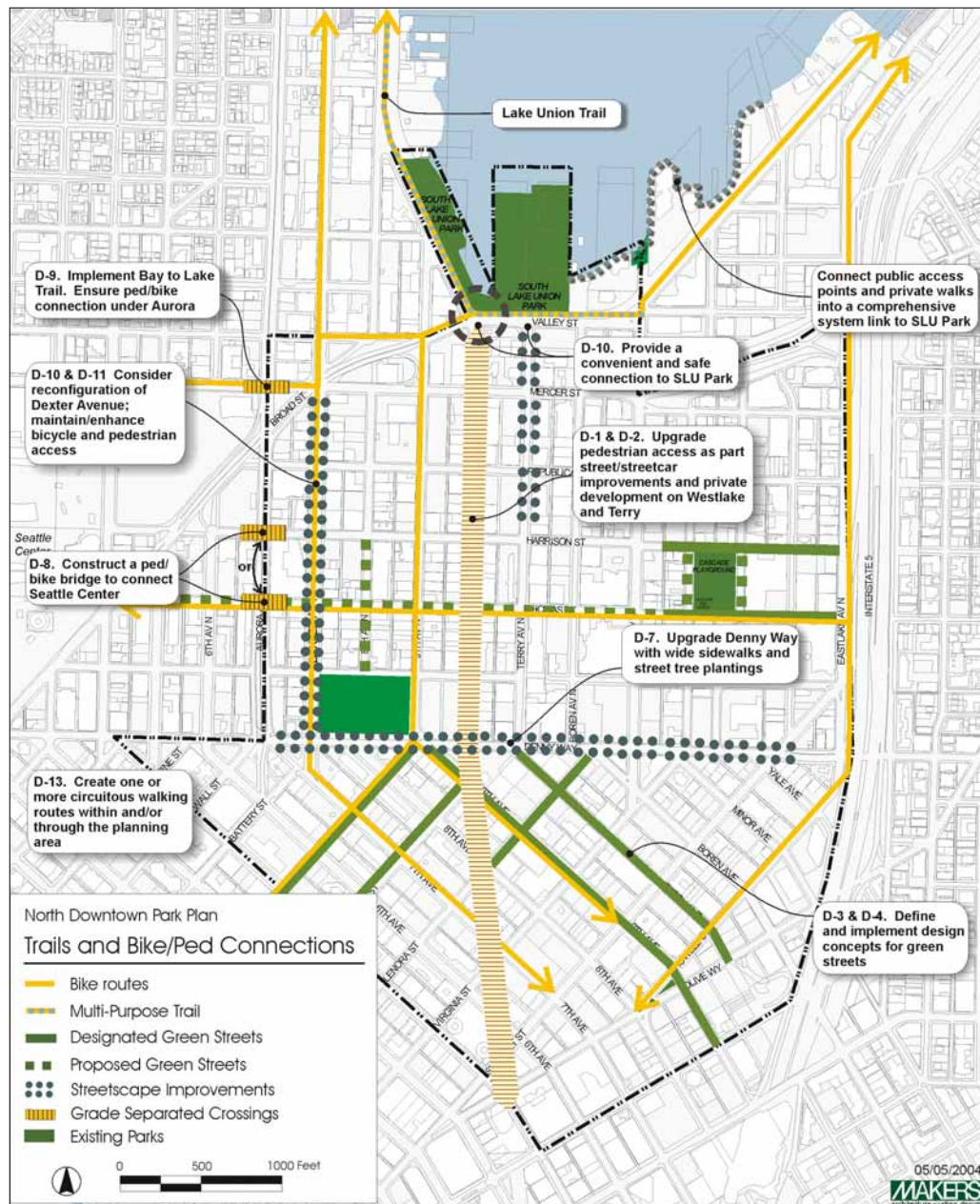


Figure 31. Trail and Bicycle/Pedestrian Connection Goals.